



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ takes innovative measures to reduce cost to state**

BATON ROUGE – The Department of Environmental Quality is rearranging its operations in a way that will save the state money, while not reducing services. Secretary Harold Leggett announced his resignation on Monday. With Assistant Secretary Peggy Hatch's promotion to the Secretary position, an opportunity for cost savings became available.

Paul Miller, the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Environmental Assessment, will move into Hatch's former position, which supervises the compliance arm of the department. Miller's vacancy will not be filled. The Office of Environmental Assessment, which includes air and water quality assessment, underground storage tanks and remediation, will be incorporated throughout the agency. Some activities will fall under the purview of the Office of Environmental Compliance, while other responsibilities will fall under the Office of Environmental Services, which is primarily responsible for permit-related activities.

By not filling Miller's position and rearranging some of the administrative costs to the other offices, DEQ estimates an annual cost savings of nearly \$200,000.

"DEQ continues to work to find cost-effective measures to save the state money while remaining efficient," Leggett said. "Through hard work and a team effort, the department has avoided large-scale layoffs due to budgetary issues. While I'm still here, and after I leave on Jan. 15, the DEQ leadership will continue to evaluate the department's resources, finances and responsibilities to the state."

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